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Security Council

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New York

President:	Mr. Buallay	(Bahrain)
Members:	Brazil	Mr. Amorim
	China	Mr. Qin Huasun
	Costa Rica	Mr. Niehaus
	France	Mr. Doutriaux
	Gabon	Mr. Moungara-Moussotsi
	Gambia	Mr. Jagne
	Japan	Mr. Takasu
	Kenya	Mr. Mahugu
	Portugal	Mr. Monteiro
	Russian Federation	Mr. Granovsky
	Slovenia	Mr. Türk
	Sweden	Mr. Dahlgren
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Burleigh

Agenda

The situation in Sierra Leone

Third progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (S/1998/1176)

98-86722 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 9.55 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Sierra Leone

Third progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (S/1998/1176)

The President (*interpretation from Arabic*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Bernard Miyet, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Miyet to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the third progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone, document S/1998/1176.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear briefings by Mr. Bernard Miyet, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, and by the representative of Sweden, Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1132 (1997) concerning Sierra Leone.

I now call on the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Bernard Miyet, in order to introduce the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone, contained in document S/1998/1176.

Mr. Miyet (Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations) (*interpretation from French*): It is a great honour for me to set this precedent in the Security Council of being able to speak to members from a seat that is not customarily mine. If possible I shall nonetheless endeavour to provide the Council with the same quality of information as in the past.

The third progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) has just been issued in document S/1998/1176, in accordance with resolution 1181 (1998), which established the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone in July 1998. The report under consideration describes the political, military and security developments in the country since the second progress report was issued on 16 October 1998. It also describes the humanitarian aspects of issues relating to human rights and to the civilian police component of the Mission and submits the Secretary-General's recommendations on future activities for the Mission.

With regard to the military and security situation in the country, in general, as noted in the report, the Government of Sierra Leone has continued to consolidate its political authority during the period under review. The military and security situation, however, continues to be extremely volatile and unpredictable because of the persistent resistance of elements of the former military junta, which are especially active in the east and north of the country. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), and the Civil Defence Forces of Sierra Leone, which are assisting the Government in the restoration of law and order in the country, are currently overstretched and, as the report states, in great need of logistical support.

Since the drafting of the report was completed a few days ago, new developments have taken place at the security level. Elements of the former junta in the north-west of the country have advanced southwards, attacking villages again, killing and mutilating civilians, looting and again destroying property. Thousands of people have been displaced or have fled to the capital, Freetown, for safety. Despite this renewed military activity on the part of elements of the former junta, which repeats a familiar pattern, ECOMOG now states that the rebels have been repulsed and that the roads leading from the capital are now clear. There has also been a rise in tension in other parts of the country owing to rebel activity, especially in the north-east and east.

As the Council is aware, part of the Mission's mandate is to assist the Government to carry out its programme to disarm, demobilize and reintegrate into civil society all Sierra Leonean fighters, including former members of the Republic of Sierra Leone Military Forces

who had surrendered to ECOMOG. In view of the uncertain security situation, most of those former soldiers have now been reinducted to fight alongside ECOMOG and the Civil Defence Forces against the rebels.

With regard to the Mission itself, the Security Council authorized the deployment of up to 70 military observers, as well as a medical unit of 15 people. We are endeavouring to bring this about, although it depends on the permanence of the security situation in the country and on the extent to which the Government is able to carry out its disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme. Since the security situation has not improved, and the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme has not progressed, only 40 military observers and the medical team have been deployed to date. The military observers are currently based in Freetown, Hastings, Lungi, Bo, Kenema and Makeni, where they are co-deployed with ECOMOG brigades.

The Mission has also deployed five civilian police officers to advise the Government on the restructuring of the Sierra Leonean police force, which was widely discredited because of the links that it had previously established with the junta, and which is suffering from a severe shortage of the resources needed to carry out its task. In this context, the civilian police component of the Mission is working very closely with police officers deployed by the Commonwealth to work with the Government on specific projects.

(*spoke in English*)

I turn to the question of human rights.

In addition to describing the human rights violations committed by the rebels, the human rights section of the Secretary-General's report also describes the treason trials conducted by the Government against civilian and military supporters of the junta now in custody. A total of 96 persons have now been tried in five separate trials in Freetown, of whom 77 have been sentenced to death. On 19 October the Government executed by firing squad 24 military officers who had been condemned to death by a court martial without the right of appeal. All the civilian convicts are now appealing the verdict or sentence, including the leader of the Revolutionary United Front, Corporal Foday Sankoh, who was found guilty of treason by the court on 23 October. On 16 November the Secretary-General wrote to President Kabbah, appealing to him to give every consideration, once the appeals process had been exhausted, to extending mercy to those who had been condemned to death.

The human rights section of the report also describes a number of technical cooperation initiatives undertaken to improve domestic observance of human rights in Sierra Leone. In order to strengthen UNOMSIL's human rights capacity, the Secretary-General is planning to deploy a further five human rights officers to Sierra Leone.

With regard to the humanitarian situation, the efforts of the humanitarian community to maintain access to populations in need, especially in the north and the east, have been disrupted further in the last few days by a spate of rebel attacks near Freetown, which has caused thousands of villagers to flee and has rendered the roads unsafe. There is general insecurity on the roads in all parts of the country. The report estimates that more than 300,000 people have now been displaced within the country since February 1998, an increase of nearly 60,000 since the second progress report. In the wake of recent fighting near Freetown, travel outside the capital for United Nations and humanitarian personnel is now conducted only by air and only to destinations where ECOMOG is present and confirms safety upon arrival.

Yesterday, the 1999 consolidated inter-agency appeal for Sierra Leone was launched in Geneva in the amount of $28 million. The appeal was prepared by United Nations agencies, in consultation with Governments, national and international non-governmental organizations and donors, and comprises 29 projects ranging from immediate life-saving needs to longer-term projects to promote peace and sustainable socio-economic development.

On 30 July 1998, the Secretariat convened a Special Conference on Sierra Leone, in which pledges were made to support the Government and ECOMOG's efforts. The Conference was followed by a meeting of the Contact Group on Sierra Leone in London on 5 November. In Freetown, a Government working group, chaired by the Minister of Finance, Development and Economic Planning, Mr. James Jonah, is following up on the pledges and commitments made in order to ensure speedy disbursement.

Taking all these elements into account, the Secretary-General, as can be seen from the report, is recommending that the Security Council extend the

mandate of UNOMSIL by a further six months when its mandate expires on 13 January 1999.

The President *(interpretation from Arabic):* I thank Mr. Miyet for his comprehensive briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of Sweden, His Excellency, Mr. Hans Dahlgren, who is also Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1132 (1997) concerning Sierra Leone and who will brief the Council on his recent visit to Sierra Leone.

Mr. Dahlgren (Sweden): I am grateful for this opportunity to brief the Security Council about my visit last week to Sierra Leone and Liberia.

I undertook that visit in my capacity as Chairman of the Sierra Leone sanctions Committee, and the Council will recall that, in its follow-up to the Secretary-General's report on Africa, it recommended that those of us who chair sanctions committees ought also to visit the areas we deal with in these committees from time to time for the purpose, of course, of obtaining better information at firsthand, but also to show a presence and to make it clear that we who impose sanctions by adopting resolutions in this Chamber are also actively engaged in their implementation and in making sure that they are enforced.

So my primary assignment during that visit was to study the implementation of the sanctions that are currently in place against the rebel forces in Sierra Leone. These, as members know, include an arms embargo on the non-governmental forces, as well as a travel ban for the members of the military junta. Yesterday we had an informal meeting of the sanctions Committee to talk about some conclusions, in some detail. But, of course, I also came back with some general impressions regarding the crisis in that country, about which I would like to say a few words today.

It has been said that one of the first victims of war is the truth. And it may be important to mention at the outset that the absence of accurate and verifiable information in a civil war situation such as the one in Sierra Leone should serve as a warning not to rush to conclusions. Absolute facts are hard to come by — in particular regarding violations of sanctions — but one thing is indisputable, and obvious even to a visitor who stays there for less than a week: the situation in Sierra Leone is tense, and as we heard from Under-Secretary-General Miyet, it has not got any better lately.

Although Freetown is liberated together with other parts of the country, Sierra Leone is still plagued by a civil war and the rebels have proved to be a very tough target. Their activities, which we all know bring immense human suffering in their wake, are both highly mobile and unpredictable: defeated in one part of the country, they have been able to remobilize and to increase their terror in other parts. Right now, we understand there is intense rebel activity in the north-western part of the country, and that has raised tensions in the capital even further. Of course, this has made it difficult for the people of Sierra Leone to return fully to normal life. This applies, above all, to the more than half a million people who are internally displaced persons or refugees in other countries.

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) is generally seen to be doing a good job at promoting stability and helping extend safety to the people of Sierra Leone. However, logistical restraints do remain, and during our talks with the Force Commanders, we were asked directly to transmit requests for stronger international support.

The acts of terror committed against civilians by the rebels in Sierra Leone are absolutely horrendous. It is hard to find words strong enough to describe these atrocities; they even use mutilation to spread their terror, simply cutting off parts of the body of their victims with large knives. They cut off arms and legs, even noses and ears. They burn men, women and children alive. According to the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) more than 4,000 people have been either summarily executed or mutilated since April this year. Pictures of maimed children are now circulating in world media, and when one has learned about these gruesome acts at first hand, it is not hard to understand the strong calls for an international criminal court that are arising out of this situation.

The humanitarian situation is also serious, and of particular concern, as Under-Secretary-General Miyet emphasized, is the fact that parts of the country remain out of reach for humanitarian organizations, and therefore we do not know the full scope of the tragic situation. We did hear some complaints about ECOMOG and the Civil Defence Forces (CDF) sometimes having made humanitarian access difficult. I therefore found reason during my visit to share with the relevant actors, in my national capacity, our view of the importance of showing

respect for humanitarian law and of reaching out to civilians in a crisis such as this.

Of particular concern when looking into this conflict is the extreme burden carried by the children of Sierra Leone. They have become victims on both sides, and we know that, unfortunately, this is not a new problem in this region. Many of these young children were abducted long ago into the ranks of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), and they are now — some of them perhaps at the age of only eight or ten — some of the fiercest fighters in the war. Of course, they are heavily traumatized, fed violence and destruction for a large part of their lives, and I think one of the biggest challenges ahead will be to integrate the surviving children of Sierra Leone into a society where identity is based on respect and common norms, and not on carrying a loaded rifle. These children should be able to go to school and to play with their friends. They should be able to be with their families and not grow up with fighters as their role models. I would like to plead, in the strongest possible terms, that special attention be given to the situation of the children of Sierra Leone in the international support provided for the reconstruction of the country. And I think it is proper, also for the sake of the children, to plead with the Government of Sierra Leone to continue to make very serious efforts at national reconciliation. That is the only way to provide a sound and secure future for the country — and the children are our future.

It is hard to see that any military solution to the conflict can provide a lasting peace in Sierra Leone. In that context, it is also difficult to find viable alternatives to initiating a dialogue. Attempts to reach out towards a peaceful solution are now being made by the Government, and I strongly believe that this should be encouraged and that no effort ought to be spared to get the rebels to lay down their arms and surrender.

As we have seen in the report of the Secretary-General, there is quite a discussion in Sierra Leone these days about executions: those that took place earlier this fall and a number of further death sentences that have been handed down and which have all been appealed. Speaking not for the sanctions Committee but in my capacity as Sweden's representative to the United Nations, I pleaded with the authorities in Sierra Leone, including the President, not to make further use of the death penalty — for reasons of principle to us, but also for the sake of succeeding in the reconciliation efforts. It is my feeling that there is a readiness to attempt to heed such pleas, even if that is by no means assured in each individual case.

When speaking about the issue of the war in Sierra Leone, I would also like to emphasize the importance of the regional approach. The relation between Sierra Leone and Liberia is, of course, particularly relevant. Important steps towards the building of renewed confidence have been taken by the Secretary-General, and these are now being vigorously pursued by both Mr. Okelo and Mr. Downes-Thomas, as the Representatives of the Secretary-General in the two countries. I would also like to mention the efforts of the United States and of the Reverend Jesse Jackson to try to reinvigorate the Mano River Union; we feel that these are bearing encouraging results as well. Both President Kabbah in Sierra Leone and President Taylor in Liberia expressed to us their commitment to pursue the track of bilateral cooperation.

Let me conclude these general observations by commending the very efficient and important work carried out by UNOMSIL. I believe that that mission is an excellent example of how a relatively small United Nations presence, with the right mix of components, can play a very significant role. That goes for the military observers, but also for a very dedicated team of human rights staff as well as for the civilian police element.

Turning now to the question of sanctions, of course it is obvious that these are not fully implemented. We heard many reports of arms and ammunition getting through to the rebels from outside Sierra Leone. Although some of the resupplies seem to come from looting and attacks within the country itself, arms and ammunition are reportedly also coming in from the outside, and that is obviously in contravention of the mandatory Security Council resolution.

The land borders of Sierra Leone with both Guinea and Liberia are very porous and difficult to monitor. But there is a strong perception in Sierra Leone that outside support of this kind is indeed coming in from Liberia. No tangible evidence was presented to us, and the quantities of the reported deliveries are difficult to assess. Some of our interlocutors referred to this as a trickle of arms. Others — and I want to mention in particular the ECOMOG commanders, but also some foreign observers in Freetown — claim that more substantial deliveries have been reported, including by truck and by helicopter.

The President of Liberia, Mr. Charles Taylor, with whom I had the opportunity to raise these issues, said that he could not dispute that some, though less significant, trafficking of arms did indeed come through Liberia, but he also stated clearly that his Government

was not involved in this. He also denied reports that we had heard, that rebel leaders had been allowed to travel freely into his country. When we were there, President Taylor reiterated the proposal he had previously made to the President of Sierra Leone on setting up a system of joint border controls with that country.

From our talks with President Kabbah in Freetown, we understood that this is a proposal that is seen as a good starting point also in Sierra Leone. I too believe that it could be very useful if the United Nations together with the international community were to consider supporting such joint operations. Such support could include technical equipment, but also actual border monitors or observers; this would serve as an important confidence-building measure, provided that the necessary security assurances could be obtained, and also as a way of safeguarding the Security Council sanctions.

At the same time, I would like to reiterate a point which I made several times during the visit: that in the end it rests upon each and every State to do its utmost to ensure respect for United Nations sanctions. That cannot be taken over by anyone else.

There are surely those individuals who make a good living out of the arms trade in West Africa, where, as is well known, diamonds are a handsome reward in return. To my mind, there is, of course, no excuse for such behaviour. Nor is there any excuse for sustaining the war in Sierra Leone by supporting the rebels with arms.

The sanctions committee for Sierra Leone discussed these matters in detail yesterday, and when it delivers its formal report later this month, I believe it might include some observations that will be useful to build on in the future work of the Committee and of the Council itself in relation to this matter. This concerns the arms embargo, but also enforcement of the travel restrictions. As members will have gathered from what I have said, it is my hope that the sanctions Committee will continue to involve itself actively in doing its part to promote peace in Sierra Leone.

The President (*interpretation from Arabic*): I thank the representative of Sweden for his most insightful statement, which reflected his full knowledge of the situation in Sierra Leone. He spoke of the civil war in that country and of its implications in terms of the problems faced by the people of Sierra Leone, especially children — a matter which makes it particularly urgent that we tackle the security situation there, along with the problem of refugees and displaced persons, by putting in place an effective humanitarian assistance programme and endeavouring to find a peaceful resolution of the situation. I thank him also for highlighting the linkage between the situations in Sierra Leone and in Liberia.

Mr. Doutriaux (France) (*interpretation from French*): I thank Mr. Bernard Miyet for briefing the Council on the situation in Sierra Leone on behalf of the Secretary-General. I also thank Ambassador Dahlgren for briefing us following his visit to the region, *inter alia* in his capacity as Chairman of the sanctions Committee on Sierra Leone.

We note from those briefings that considerable and serious difficulties remain, with an impact on the humanitarian situation of the population. Human rights violations persist, and executions have taken place; we have condemned these. In the military sphere, as Mr. Miyet has noted, attacks by rebel forces continue.

But when we read the report of the Secretary-General, we note that there have been some encouraging developments — particularly the recent summit that brought together President Kabbah of Sierra Leone, President Taylor of Liberia and President Conte of Guinea — which make it possible to envisage rapprochement among those three countries. It is clear that the internal situation in Sierra Leone depends also on what takes place on the regional level, so we should support anything that can be done to promote rapprochement among the three leaders and among their countries. Let me note in passing that those three presidents, along with many other African leaders, participated in the Franco-African Summit held at Paris a few weeks ago.

On the internal level, there is clearly only one solution: dialogue. Of course, the prerequisite for such dialogue is a cessation of hostilities by the rebels. Let us acknowledge that in Sierra Leone, as in many other countries in Africa where there is civil war, hostilities must cease and dialogue must be promoted between the Government and those contesting its authority.

The solution should also include support for regional initiatives, namely, for the work and actions of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and its Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). This is what we are doing in our resolutions and also what some donor countries supporting ECOMOG are doing. France is also providing its support through bilateral

assistance to support the Guinea-Conakry contingent participating in ECOMOG activities in Sierra Leone.

Finally, allow me also to refer to what the Chairman of the sanctions Committee on Sierra Leone has said. We must continue to question ourselves about the effectiveness of our policy of embargo on the supply of arms to rebels in Sierra Leone. We must ask ourselves about its effectiveness and whether it should perhaps be strengthened to promote an abatement of tension and an end to conflict in Sierra Leone.

I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this open debate on an item that remains a matter of concern despite some encouraging signs.

The President (*interpretation from Arabic*): I thank the representative of France for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Mahugu (Kenya): Allow me first to thank you, Mr. President, for arranging this meeting in an open setting. As has been said by the representative of France, we believe that this can only enhance transparency and hopefully increase the Council's effectiveness.

My delegation would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Miyet for his introduction of the report of the Secretary-General and, indeed, for his update. We would also like to thank Ambassador Dahlgren of Sweden for the excellent report on his recent visit to Sierra Leone as the Chairman of the Sierra Leone Security Council sanctions Committee, which has nourished our understanding of the actual situation on the ground.

I myself recall my visit earlier this year to Angola in my capacity as the Chairman of the Angola Security Council sanctions Committee. I must say that I found that visit to be important and indeed necessary, not only for myself, but as something that should be done by all chairmen of Security Council sanctions committees. I am therefore very happy to note that Ambassador Dahlgren did visit Sierra Leone, and I hope that in the future other chairmen of the Council's sanctions committees will be able to visit their respective areas.

Because of the unending nature of the conflict in Sierra Leone and the immense costs to the civilian population, the dual- track approach as envisaged, combining both military and diplomatic elements, is a most pragmatic venture that my delegation wholeheartedly supports. However, for this to succeed we need the full support not only of the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL), but also of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). In this regard, we appreciate the Gambia's emerging efforts to broker a peace deal with the rebels.

Sierra Leone's relations with its neighbours clearly also needs to be nourished. Ambassador Dahlgren also referred to this point in his briefing. This is why my delegation encourages more frequent meetings of the Mano River Union, as he has said. Indeed, in previous Council meetings, my delegation has suggested that such summit-level meetings could be augmented by a more regular permanent senior officials meeting to deal with petty problems and establish relations that would enhance confidence-building measures. This sort of arrangement has worked quite well in our region of East Africa, and we encourage the parties in Sierra Leone to look at it closely.

It is because of the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) that the constitutionally elected Government was re-installed in Sierra Leone. We must all support ECOMOG's efforts on the military side through l gistical support and forces. This would strengthen our negotiating voice in the dual-track approach currently envisioned.

In brief, because of the reasons that I have advanced, Kenya supports the Secretary-General's recommendation to extend the mandate of UNOMSIL, upon its expiration in January of next year, for a further six months, to July 1999.

The United Nations, we believe, has done a very good job in Sierra Leone under the very able leadership of the Secretary-General's Special Representative, Mr. Okelo, and the men and women of UNOMSIL. They deserve our full support.

The President (*interpretation from Arabic*): I thank the representative of Kenya for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Niehaus (Costa Rica) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation would like to thank Ambassador Dahlgren and Under-Secretary-General Miyet for the very timely and important information they have given us on Sierra Leone. We would also like to thank you, Mr. President, for taking the wise decision of continuing this practice of open briefings, which is essential for the transparency of the work of the Council and which we believe should be followed in the future.

During his visit to the United Nations a few months ago, President Kabbah said that he was giving particular attention to the idea of demilitarizing the country and putting it under civil control. Costa Rica understands that the security situation in Sierra Leone is very complex as a result of the activities of the rebels who carried out the *coup d'état*. We also understand that, in the light of these circumstances, it may be very difficult and perhaps even untimely for the Government to take concrete steps to move in that direction.

Our own national experience has shown us and convinced us of the opportunities presented for small, developing countries by the demilitarization of society. This is why we would like to draw attention to this issue and express our hope that Sierra Leone will be able to make progress towards that goal in the future.

The President (*interpretation from Arabic*): I thank the representative of Costa Rica for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Takasu (Japan): I would like to join the previous speakers in expressing my delegation's appreciation to Under-Secretary-General Miyet for his update of the situation in Sierra Leone. We are also grateful to Ambassador Dahlgren, who made a second trip to Sierra Leone as the Chairman of the sanctions Committee. His first-hand briefing this morning was very informative and extremely useful. I would like to join Ambassador Mahugu in his earlier comment that the visits of chairmen of sanctions committees to the relevant countries can be very useful in giving us first-hand briefings to form the basis of our valuable discussions.

My delegation would also like to commend the role of the United Nations in Sierra Leone, the Secretary-General's Special Representative, Mr. Okelo, and the members of the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL), together with the invaluable role being played there by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), to bring peace and security to that country.

According to this morning's briefing, it is very clear that the current military and security situation is very worrisome. We are particularly concerned about the immense humanitarian suffering caused by the rebels' continuing attacks on civilians and about the plight of children. Reports of children being forced into combat continue.

On the other hand, the report of the Secretary-General gives us some encouraging signs. For instance, we are encouraged by the effort made by the Government of Sierra Leone towards national reconciliation and by certain progress made in the demobilization and integration of former combatants. We also welcome the Government's recent commitment not to involve combatants under the age of 18.

For reasons of time, I would like to raise only one issue this morning, namely, the question of how effective the sanctions regime has been and how to strengthen it. Ambassador Dahlgren came back with the news about the concept of joint patrols on the common border with Liberia, which is a very important subject. I wish to refer not only to the effectiveness of the sanctions regime, but also to subregional approaches aimed at producing confidence-building measures between the neighbouring countries. I would appreciate it if either Ambassador Dahlgren or Under-Secretary-General Miyet could comment on a few of these issues at the end of this round of discussions. Indeed, the Secretary-General's report talks about this concept in several paragraphs.

There are several concepts here. One is the joint patrolling of the two countries' common border by the Sierra Leonean Government force and the Liberian force. The other is to do this internationally, for instance through or with the assistance of ECOMOG.

My question here concerns the role of the United Nations. Paragraph 6 of the report of the Secretary-General notes that Ambassador Dahlgren was approached by local authorities requesting that United Nations military observers be deployed in assisting ECOMOG in patrolling the frontier. Another paragraph touches on the question of cooperation between the two countries in joint border patrols.

This is perhaps a major issue, and I should like some more information about the role of military observers. While I appreciate, for instance, support in terms of technical equipment, as mentioned by Ambassador Dahlgren, with respect to the deployment of military observers along the border and greater involvement in joint patrols, my first question would be, is this viable? Obviously, this is not part of UNOMSIL's mandate at this time, and the current authorized level of UNOMSIL does not allow it. Again, I would ask if these proposals are viable, and if it is worthwhile pursuing the expansion of UNOMSIL's mandate and strength, if necessary.

Mr. Amorim (Brazil): Mr. President, let me also say, as previous speakers have done, that I very much appreciate the fact that you have organized this open briefing. I hope that this practice will become common in the future, as it is a very useful one for the work of the Security Council and for the benefit of the membership at large. I wish also to thank Mr. Miyet for his enlightening briefing on the situation in Sierra Leone and to express my gratitude to Ambassador Dalhgren for his leadership in chairing the sanctions Committee on Sierra Leone and for the very useful information he shared with us after his trip to that country.

I do not wish to comment at length on the contents of these reports. I am sure that we will have the opportunity to discuss them next month. Of course, it is a very discouraging picture, one which includes mutilations and the use of children in armed conflict. I would also agree with what Ambassador Dahlgren said to the authorities in Sierra Leone in his national capacity about the death penalty. I do not think that is the best way to promote reconciliation.

I would like also to avail myself of this opportunity to pay tribute once again to Ambassador Dahlgren for the way he conducted the work of the Committee. I think it is an appropriate time to do so, because Sweden's term in the Security Council is coming to a close. Through him, I wish also to pay tribute to the chairmen of the other sanctions Committees who are leaving the Council at the end of December, especially for the leadership they collectively exercised in pushing us — the other chairmen of sanctions Committees who are staying on the Council for another year — to present a paper on sanctions.

I think what Ambassador Dahlgren said today illustrates very clearly the need for an in-depth discussion on sanctions, and I think we owe a debt of gratitude to the five permanent representatives, including Ambassador Dahlgren, who were very active in that field.

I believe also that sooner rather than later we should have an open discussion in this Chamber on the question of sanctions. I think it was very clear from what Ambassador Dahlgren said not only in relation to Sierra Leone but also in his allusions to other situations — and I interpreted one of them as referring to Angola — that a discussion of sanctions as an instrument of the Security Council is very important. Normally when these questions are raised, there is always some preoccupation or concern that a discussion on sanctions would be only an opportunity to attack sanctions regimes. I do not think that is so. Of course, one may have doubts about some sanctions regimes or about the humanitarian consequences in some cases, and it is legitimate that a discussion on that should also take place, as it did in the General Assembly.

But I believe that the most important aspect is that sanctions often are an instrument of peace if they are well implemented. If we look into the situation of some other countries in the reports that we have had in the press, not only about the sale of diamonds but also about the purchase of armaments and so on, we can see the importance of the use of this instrument as probably very often the only way to maintain peace in a given country or a given situation.

I wish therefore once again to commend your initiative, Mr. President, of keeping up this practice of holding open briefings, and to express my gratitude to all the chairmen of sanctions committees, who are now, let us say, represented by Ambassador Dahlgren, and to thank him for the presentation he has just made.

The President (*interpretation from Arabic*): I subscribe to the hope expressed by Brazil that these plenary open meetings will be held more frequently in the interest of all.

Mr. Burleigh (United States of America): I too, like my colleagues, would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Miyet for his briefing and his update on the report. I should like especially to recognize Ambassador Dahlgren and his contribution, both in his role as Chairman of the sanctions Committee for the past difficult period and for this initiative he has taken, the results of which we have learned about today — that is, the indispensable personal observations and assessments he has made about the situation in Sierra Leone. I agree with Ambassador Amorim that the situation on the ground there is very discouraging.

I want to thank Ambassador Dahlgren for his mention of the role that our presidential Special Envoy, Reverend Jesse Jackson, is trying to play in facilitating the reconciliation between the countries in question. He was here this week and was able to brief Council colleagues about his activities, and we will continue to keep Council members informed of his efforts.

I have two specific questions, because, as has been noted, we will go into more detail later when we talk about the renewal of the mandate. But I wanted to ask, on this joint border-monitoring mechanism proposal

between Liberia and Sierra Leone, if either Ambassador Dahlgren or Under-Secretary-General Miyet would like to address what practical next steps there may be or what role we might play in trying to help this process along — "we" meaning the Council or the Secretariat.

Secondly, for Under-Secretary-General Miyet, I have a question about the force protection of the United Nations personnel deployed there, and whether he believes that arrangements are still adequate for their protection or whether some consideration is still being given to any redeployment of the personnel of the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL).

Mr. Monteiro (Portugal): My delegation also is very happy with the format of this meeting, and I praise you, Mr. President, for organizing it. Naturally I would recall that this is one of the guidelines that we have already adopted in the Council, and I believe that this practice will continue in future. The fact that other States Members of the Organization are participating here or listening to us constitutes an incentive to go ahead with this decision already taken by the Security Council.

I am pleased also to see Under-Secretary-General Miyet at this meeting. As he told us in the beginning of his intervention, he also is pleased to be here, and we welcome his presence at this open briefing. The Council has benefited a lot from the briefings of Mr. Miyet, and this is a good opportunity for other States to listen to him.

Ambassador Dahlgren is also creating a precedent here, as was already underlined by my colleagues. I would like to underline it as well. It is very important that we are having this open meeting because it underlines the more active role we want the sanctions committees and their Chairpersons to play.

We are debating these proposals in the Security Council, and I very much hope we will take decisions by the end of this month — we are in your hands, Mr. President, until the end of this month — to adopt some guidelines on the questions relating to the debate on sanctions referred to by Ambassador Amorim. The most important point is the role of the Chairpersons of the sanctions committees.

As Ambassador Dahlgren said here, it is not only important that the Chairpersons can get better information during their visits to the region or countries targeted, by the sanctions; it is not only gathering better information that is important, and afterwards coming here and sharing this information as Ambassador Dahlgren did with us this morning — the other point that he made regarding the implementation of sanctions is also very important. This is absolutely essential. We are going on and on, and it is clear that we have to address this question of arms embargoes in a different way. Because if not, they are ineffective, and the Council sometimes seems to be collaborating passively with situations that are totally unacceptable.

We can do this only in an open way. We can do this only with the participation of all the Member States of the Organization. It is not only the Security Council that can do this. This is a responsibility of the whole Organization. For the Organization to be responsible, naturally it is important for the Security Council to provide information and to share these elements and this work with the general membership. It is important to reveal to the general membership more of the work of the sanctions committees and the work we do in these committees.

Regarding the situation in Sierra Leone, I would like very much again to address and thank Ambassador Dahlgren for the very good briefing, in addition to the excellent report that we have from the Secretary-General. Given the time limits, I would just underline two points regarding the information that was shared with us. First of all, Ambassador Dahlgren provides a very vivid picture of how appalling the human rights situation in Sierra Leone is. One point he made is very important. It is important that it be clear that those who are committing these crimes will not be able to do so with impunity. That is why it so important that the International Criminal Court was created this year in Rome. This is very important, because it is absolutely essential to avoid impunity in future situations, as well as in the ones we are facing now.

At the same, this calls our attention to another point. In many of these conflicts there can be no military solutions. We have to have, in the end, dialogue and national reconciliation. National reconciliation is an important factor in which, again, human rights play an important role — the guarantee of individuals' rights. That is why the appeal of the Secretary-General to President Kabbah on the questions of executions and the death penalty is, in my opinion, so important.

Naturally, I would like to praise again what Ambassador Dahlgren said about the situation of children. This is an important aspect, and this is why,

too, it is so important for the whole Organization to support the role of Ambassador Olara Otunnu. Olara Otunnu is now dealing with the situation of children in armed conflicts, and we have to give him all possible support, and we have to praise the Secretary-General for creating this important function at the United Nations.

Once again I would like to praise the work of Ambassador Dahlgren and the initiative that he himself took, not only this second time. He visited the region twice: the first time in his national capacity, and this time as Chairman of the sanctions Committee. I would like very much to praise him for this.

The President (*interpretation from Arabic*): I appreciate the words of encouragement from the representative of Portugal.

Mr. Türk (Slovenia): I would like to join the preceding speakers in expressing our appreciation to you, Mr. President, for having organized the briefing and the discussion today in the present format. My remarks will be brief since time is precious.

I would like to say, first of all, that we are grateful to the Secretary-General for the comprehensive report and to Mr. Miyet, the Under-Secretary-General, for the introduction. We studied the report, which details the military and security situation and the political aspects of the situation, and we can certainly say that, like others, we value very highly the role of the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL), and we support the expansion of its mandate. Moreover, the important feature of the report — namely, the one related to human rights — is something that deserves our full support, and we hope that, during the detailed discussion that the Council will have at a later stage, we will be able to speak about these issues in some more detail.

Today, however, I would like to limit my remarks to some of the points made by Ambassador Dahlgren, who visited the country recently. I would like, as others have, to thank Ambassador Dahlgren for his presentation and join in the opinion voiced by Ambassador Amorim a short while ago when he characterized Ambassador Dahlgren's mission as an embodiment of the wishes and aspirations of many members of the Security Council. I think that his presentation today provided useful insight into the situation.

The practice of the Chairmen of sanctions committees visiting the target countries or areas is very valuable. We believe that it requires more careful consideration. The experiences gained in this context should be given proper consideration. This practice is still at an early stage. I think that we are beyond the experimental stage, but not at the stage where the practice is fully established and applicable to all the sanctions committees. So I think that some further reflection is necessary.

We understand that the sanctions Committee has discussed some of the detailed issues relating to the operation of sanctions. I would like to mention just one point in this connection. Ambassador Dahlgren rightly emphasized the importance of cooperation by all States in the proper implementation of the sanctions regime. I think that this is a very valid point, a central point in the operation of the sanctions regime under resolution 1132 (1997), and I think that this basic point relates to all sanctions regimes currently in place. I think the Security Council should give proper consideration to the issue of the implementation of sanctions later on, when the discussion on the working paper by the Chairpersons of the sanctions committees — which was referred to earlier in the debate today — is taken up again by the Security Council.

Finally, a few points on the political situation in Sierra Leone in general. Again I would like to thank Ambassador Dahlgren for providing us with very valuable insights. He spoke about a very tense situation, about the widespread guerilla warfare and about problems that are very serious and to which solutions will not be easy to find.

I would like to recall in this connection that the Security Council has always insisted on a peaceful resolution of the conflict. I would just like to quote from paragraph 3 of resolution 1132 (1997) — the basic resolution on this issue, adopted by the Security Council on 8 October 1997. In the specific context of that time, that resolution insisted on support "for the peaceful restoration of the constitutional order" in the country.

Nothing that has happened subsequent to the adoption of that resolution has changed that fundamental insistence of the Security Council and the fundamental principle of the Security Council's approach. Therefore, we very strongly support all the efforts mentioned by Ambassador Dahlgren to seek a peaceful solution.

I would like to mention that we certainly support the efforts by Reverend Jackson and by the leaders in the region, and, above all, we support the efforts of the International Contact Group on Sierra Leone, which met

in London on 5 November. We would like to encourage the continuation of those efforts.

Now, international efforts in themselves will not be enough and the true path to a solution is national reconciliation in the country. Many who have spoken before me emphasized in this context the importance of the fate of children and we certainly associate ourselves with all their points.

We would like to add only one additional point. The executions which have taken place in the recent past require critical consideration by the Security Council. We do not think that executions lead to national reconciliation and this has to be given proper attention, especially in light of future developments, including the fate of Foday Sankoh, which may be an issue to be kept in mind by the Security Council's members.

In conclusion, I would like to say once again that we shall come back to the situation in a more detailed way when the Council takes up the report. But at this stage I would like to conclude by saying that the present format of briefing and consideration of these issues by the Security Council is very useful.

Mr. Moungara Moussotsi (Gabon) (*interpretation from French*): I, too, wish to thank the Secretariat, in particular Mr. Miyet, for the very extensive report that, as always, has been submitted to us. We are also grateful to Ambassador Dahlgren of Sweden for his initiative in visiting Sierra Leone and Liberia in his capacity as Chairman of the Sierra Leone sanctions Committee. He did so in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the Council, in particular resolution 1196 (1998) on this subject.

We are encouraged by certain positive signs, such as the implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone and the efforts of the Government and the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG).

However, we are obliged to note that concerns persist, in particular about barbaric activities undertaken by the rebels. My delegation was especially shocked by the information we have just received concerning the mutilation, execution and burning of women, children and other civilians. We believe that ECOMOG should be supported by the international community in its efforts to assist the Government of Sierra Leone in coping with the rebels. We believe, like other delegations, that the execution of members of the former military junta does not contribute to dialogue. We favour their being granted amnesty, which would promote national reconciliation in Sierra Leone.

We are also concerned by the significant trade in weapons, which reinforces my delegation's conviction that only a joint campaign against the illegal arms trade can resolve this problem. We welcome the recent summit of heads of State of members of the Mano River Union and encourage them to help Sierra Leone pursue, in the light of its experience, its campaign against illicit arms trafficking. We believe that there is a need for the involvement not only of the United Nations and the Security Council, but also, as some Ambassadors here have already said, of the entire international community and all States Members of the United Nations, in a sustained and coordinated effort against the illicit trade in weapons.

My delegation reserves the right to return to the report and its content in the impending debate.

Mr. Jagne (Gambia): My delegation is grateful to Ambassador Dahlgren and, through him, to the Government of Sweden for the keen interest that they have always shown in Sierra Leone. Ambassador Dahlgren's recent trip to that country is a clear testimony to his commitment as Chairman of the Sierra Leone sanctions Committee. The importance of such visits cannot be overemphasized. We also thank the Secretary-General for his report and Mr. Miyet for his update.

Whilst noting with satisfaction that the Sierra Leonean Government is consolidating its authority, we deplore the fact that the military situation is still volatile and unpredictable, due likely to rebel activity, killing and mutilating of civilians. Ambassador Dahlgren has given us a graphic illustration of these atrocities.

Only the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) has the ability to deal with the rebels and to help restore stability to Sierra Leone. This is why my delegation has been calling for increased assistance to ECOMOG. Furthermore, the impact of the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) will be felt better only when ECOMOG is given the logistics and material support that it requires. ECOMOG and UNOMSIL have mutually reinforcing roles. They complement each other, but if one of the parties is lacking adequate resources, their overall performance will not be satisfactory.

Only a few days ago, we began an open debate on post-conflict peace-building, but we all know that, without the necessary resources, there can be no meaningful peace-building. This is why the international community should disburse, as quickly as possible -- as indicated by Mr. Miyet — the pledges and commitments made during the special conference on Sierra Leone. We cannot see how, without the adequate resources, the Government's programme of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration could be carried forward, especially the component affecting women and children.

With regard to the question of human rights, we have no doubt that a successful rehabilitation programme, within the wider context of post-conflict peace-building, could also take care of human rights concerns. Post-conflict peace-building efforts should be concentrated on development-oriented projects for self-employment. Creating attractive outlets for ex-combatants and even rebels would encourage them to lay down their arms and participate in the uphill task of nation-building.

So much for the internal situation. From a regional perspective, as the representative of France rightly pointed out, subregional and regional cooperation is also important in the search for peace. The Mano River Union summit is a case in point. President Kabbah paid an official visit to the Gambia recently. Such high-level exchanges of visits contribute to confidence-building and should be encouraged.

Finally, we support the Secretary-General's recommendation for the extension of the mandate of UNOMSIL for another six-month period. We also salute the role of Reverend Jackson in the region and we thank you, Sir, for organizing this open meeting, which we find very useful.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock (United Kingdom): Thank you, Sir, for your initiative this morning. I warmly endorse the remarks of colleagues about the relevance of doing what we are doing this morning in an open meeting, and we must do more of them.

I should like to thank Under-Secretary-General Miyet for his briefing of us this morning. He made some important points about how we take forward our work on Sierra Leone and these are points which we must follow up and produce action on in our discussions to come. The United Kingdom will contribute substantially to those discussions.

I particularly wanted to join colleagues in paying tribute to the skill and dedication that Ambassador Dahlgren has brought to his work as Chairman of the Sierra Leone sanctions Committee and to his initiative in undertaking his visit and reporting to us. His first-hand experience is particularly valuable in this instance. My delegation strongly supports the points that he has made, not only about the implementation of sanctions, but also, in his capacity as Permanent Representative of Sweden, about the situation in Sierra Leone itself.

The United Kingdom has a very strong continuing interest in that situation and in remedying it. We, over the past few months in particular, have called a number of special meetings, meetings of contact groups and other gatherings of interested members of the international community, together with the United Nations. We have put an increasing amount of our own resources into the situation, and we are going to continue with follow-up work on this situation to represent, as best we can, the strong interest of the international community in making things in Sierra Leone better. But we are particularly concerned about the way things are developing in that country, and especially the continuing rebel activity.

The people of Sierra Leone do have to be protected from what is really a campaign of murder, terror and horrific abuse of human rights. In these circumstances, the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) is doing excellent work, but there is a particular and an urgent need for the international community to give greater support to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), in particular to enable further troops to be sent there to join those troops already in the field. And we hope that more donor countries will come forward to join in this activity.

It is an example, as we have already begun to discuss in our debate on peace-building and post-conflict work, of how easy it is to think that a situation in a country is being improved, but we have not done quite enough to sustain that improvement. It is time, I think, to draw conclusions from the difficulties that Sierra Leone is now confronting — we have to ensure that what we believe is a post-conflict situation does not dissolve back into a real and nasty new outbreak of that conflict. So, I appeal to colleagues and to the membership of the Organization generally to take account of the briefings that we have had this morning to look again to see whether they can contribute to the work that needs to be done in Sierra Leone.

The President (*interpretation from Arabic*): I thank the representative of the United Kingdom for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Qin Huasun (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): We wish to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting today, which, in our view, will be very helpful in enhancing the transparency of the Security Council's work. We wish to thank the Secretary-General for his report and Under-Secretary-General Miyet for his briefing. We also wish to thank Ambassador Dahlgren of Sweden for his briefing on his visit to Sierra Leone. Based on information given to us by our embassy in Sierra Leone, the Swedish Ambassador's visit to Freetown, Sierra Leone, elicited considerable favourable response.

The Chinese delegation agrees generally with the Secretary-General's analysis of the situation in Sierra Leone. We commend the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) and the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) for their roles in stabilizing the situation in Sierra Leone. We also commend and support the Sierra Leone Government for adopting the dual-track approach for the smooth achievement of national reconciliation.

China is deeply disturbed by continuing reports that large amounts of arms have been flowing illegally from Liberia into rebels hands in Sierra Leone. The Security Council should attach great importance to this, since it not only violates the provisions of the relevant Security Council resolutions, but has also caused harm to large numbers of innocent civilians. We propose that the Security Council sanction Committees on Sierra Leone and Liberia carry out the necessary investigation and propose measures for improving the effectiveness of the implementation of the arms embargo. We hope that these two sanctions Committees can strengthen their coordination and exchanges in order to strengthen the implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions.

China supports the Secretary-General's recommendation for the extension of UNOMSIL's mandate for six months. We hope that when security conditions permit, the second group of military observers can be dispatched as soon as possible. In connection with the recommendation on expanding UNOMSIL's civilian staff, we propose that the views of the Sierra Leone Government be sought.

The President (*interpretation from Arabic*): I thank the representative of China for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Granovsky (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): We are grateful to Under-Secretary-General Bernard Miyet and to Ambassador Dahlgren for their substantive briefings on the situation in Sierra Leone.

The Russian Federation supports the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report, in particular his proposal for the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) for six months. We are satisfied that the Government of Sierra Leone is undertaking consistent steps in the search for a political solution to the problems. An example of such efforts is the conduct of a consultative campaign to draw up consensus proposals on major policy issues, including national reconciliation.

In view of all this Government activity, the unceasing activity of the rebels, who are guilty of many attacks on the civilian population, appears all the more horrendous. Thanks to the joint efforts of the Sierra Leone authorities and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), we expect that in the near future the international community will witness full normalization of the situation in that country.

In conclusion, we would like to express our gratitude to Ambassador Dahlgren for his effective and highly professional leadership of the sanctions Committee concerning Sierra Leone.

The President (*interpretation from Arabic*): I would like to express my thanks to all members for their kind words addressed to me and for their cooperation in holding this kind of general public meeting. In this connection, I would like to mention that credit goes to my predecessors as well. Would the representative of Sweden like to comment on the statements made thus far?

Mr. Dahlgren (Sweden): Allow me also to thank all my colleagues around the table for their kind words addressed to me.

I would like to comment on the two questions that were posed by the representatives of Japan and the United States on the proposal for joint border surveillance

between Sierra Leone and Liberia and possible assistance in that endeavour by the United Nations. This proposal, as I understand it, still has to be elaborated by the two countries. It is my understanding that only this week the Vice-President of Sierra Leone was in Monrovia and spoke to President Taylor and gave him the positive reply from President Kabbah, and I take it that there will be an intensive consultation between those two countries. I would suggest that the Secretariat, through the very able representatives that the Secretary-General has in both Freetown and Monrovia, follow up on these discussions as quickly as possible in order to obtain more details.

There are two parts to this. I suppose. The first part may be less difficult. Technical assistance could be envisaged to support these common border patrols. The second part relates to the positioning of United Nations observers themselves in the border zone. As I said, necessary security assurances must be obtained, and it would be supposed, I would assume, that the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) or the Government of Sierra Leone had established control over the border areas on the ground. That is not the case today, and until we have that situation, there is not enough security.

The President (*interpretation from Arabic*): I invite the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations to comment on the statements that have been made.

Mr. Miyet (Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations): I should like to comment first on the points raised by Ambassador Dahlgren. I, too, want to thank him for the quality of his report and for his dedication.

The question of joint border monitoring is one that we have certainly examined. As he said, these are essentially questions of security, and I would suggest that there is a role for the Sierra Leonean authorities and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) to play. For the time being, taking into account the difficulties and the means at the disposal of ECOMOG, it is clear that they do not have the capacity to deploy their troops along the borders. They are so actively engaged on other very difficult fronts that it would be difficult for them. It is clear that we cannot send even an assessment team if there is no security provided, and we are not in a position to do that at this point.

It must be clear that there are priorities at this point. The Secretary-General stated in a report in June 1998 that monitoring would improve the situation in the region. But I think that because of the difficulties on the ground, the security situation and ECOMOG's lack of means, the difficulty of trying to deploy people in the jungle — and it is a jungle — would create big difficulties.

(*spoke in French*)

A second issue was raised by the representative of the United States with regard to measures taken to guarantee the safety of the observers. I should first like to say that this is daily concern for us; for the special representatives on the ground, the force commanders who are there observing and the heads of the military observers, it is a constant concern. New instructions were given two days ago to ensure that every step is taken to deal with the renewed rebel activity near Freetown. Of course, we are continuously reviewing the security situation at each of the sites where observers are deployed. As I said earlier, for security reasons not all the observers have been deployed yet — just 40 out of 70. Furthermore, it was decided two days ago that only air transport would be used, and when ECOMOG assures us that the safety of our personnel can be assured at the destinations.

In Sierra Leone, as with other missions in which we are involved where the risks are considerable, we are endeavouring, working closely with our representatives on the ground, to deal with developments.

The President (*interpretation from Arabic*): The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 11.25 a.m.